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THE WORLD WAR JEFFERSON AND DEMOCRACY

BY FRANKLIN P. FOSTER

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The World War
Jefferson and Democracy

By
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TO PATRIOTS

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THE WORLD WAR
JEFFERSON
AND
DEMOCRACY

THE WORLD WAR
JEFFERSON AND DEMOCRACY

THE mighty conflict at arms in which four nations on one side and twenty on the other now grapple for mastery, reveals the march of Jefferson's ideals. The equal rights of nations, great and small, was the appeal of the Entente powers the moment the German army crossed the Belgian border. And the idea which made the entrance of the United States into the struggle necessary and popular was, that "the world should be made safe for democracy"—the same sentiment that glowed in Jefferson's "wish to see liberty extended to all men," in his enlightened claim, that "justice is the fundamental law of society" and in his better known jewel of the Declaration, that "governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed." It is but fair to his fame and can but be ennobling to all men to bear in mind the fact that these enchaining watchwords of which we are so proud and insistent owe their

essential significance to him, and to refrain from thinking or teaching that American democracy had its start or primary endorsement from Washington or Lincoln or Wilson. Yet there are those who urge this, and others who innocently believe it. But it is not well to propagate an error, however agreeable it may be to do so. Truth is the most wholesome element of history, as its perversion is the most evil. And the faithless record, while it may grossly extend or belittle the merits of an individual, is prone to work a greater wrong to the public at large. It has been so with regard to Jefferson, wherein writers and readers have tried to offer and receive the lessons of democracy with the world's greatest democrat left out. We justify the belligerent course of our country by the language and spirit of the Declaration of Independence, but do not lisp the name of its author. We enthuse and wax eloquent over its maxims, but lack the courage and fairness to link with them the name of the one who wrote them, of the only one who could have written them. We shout now about the ideals and valor of France and of the great debt of love and service we owe her. Yet in it all we say nothing of the pioneering republican who, beyond any other,

boldly advocated friendly and considerate treatment of her in the times succeeding the contribution of her arms to the triumph of our independence; who alone of great Americans in his day placed a sane and kindly estimate on the character of the French patriots and people, or on the cause and virtue of their revolution;[1] who was standing for peace between the United States and France, in 1797, when partisan enemies, under a pretext of doubtful merit, were crying for her invasion by an American army.

LAFAYETTE

And also, while the name of Lafayette is on every American tongue, and recitals are rife about his personal attachments to this and that American, voices are mute and pages bare in that particular of Jefferson, his life long and most intimate American friend, to whom in 1808, the care worn, battle scarred warrior of France appealed in all the eloquence of grief for sympathy, then stricken with the keenest sorrow of his life, for fate had called from him the wife and mother of his cherished house-

hold; to whom in 1823, he subscribed himself, "your old, tender friend"; to whom in his prime he went, in Paris, 1789, taking other patriots with him, for guidance in the making of their new constitution, and into which was afterward embodied the wholesome provisions agreed upon in the house of the American Ambassador.[2] Nor does this indicate all the kinship and care for each other of those heroic spirits. The consummate democracy of Jefferson and his thoughtful anxiety for the future of Lafayette appear at once in his suggestion to him, that he leave the party of the nobility for that of the people.[3] A rare instance of devotion is of record in the part which Jefferson bore in the placing of a bust of Lafayette in the capitol of Virginia, and in presenting to the city of Paris "a like monument of his worth."

Jefferson was delighted to learn that the State of Georgia had given the Count d' Estaing twenty thousand acres of land, and promptly said that Virginia should remember Count Rochambeau and General Lafayette in a similar manner. It was soon arranged that Lafayette should have a large tract north of the river Ohio. But on the acquirement of Louisiana, and owing to a general belief that lands would

rise rapidly in value near the city of New Orleans, a change in its location was made, and Congress, at the instance and with the concurrence of Jefferson, then President, provided for the conveyance to him of ten thousand acres in that vicinity. And during the visit of Lafayette to this country, 1824, Jefferson expressed the hope that we might close our welcome to him "with something more substantial than dinners and balls," and proposed "that Congress testify its gratitude to the Nation's benefactor by making a handsome pecuniary provision for him," the response to which by the honorable body was a vote of two hundred thousand dollars and a township of land in Louisiana, to our great guest in further "consideration of his services and expenditures in the American Revolution."

But the partiality of Jefferson for Lafayette, even in a material way, was not measured alone in land and money. He tendered high honor also. One of Jefferson's long cherished desires was that Lafayette might remove and with his family become permanently settled as a citizen of this country, and having closed the deal with France for Louisiana, bringing to us its unmeasured advantages and the possibilities of ocean to ocean empire, he again,

while President, tried to attract the General to our shores, and with that and his superb qualifications in view, asked him to become governor of the new possession.[4]

The French, English, Italian and Japanese envoys, while on their several missions to the United States in 1917, looking to a concerted defense of democracy, were conducted to the tomb of Washington, and the French representatives were escorted to the grave of Lincoln. This was all highly respectful and appropriate. But they were not invited to visit the sacred spot where Jefferson sleeps; and this was the result of American stupidity and inexcusable neglect. Lafayette, on his return to this country, went to Mt. Vernon in honor of his great soldier chief. But he did not forget the apostle of American democracy, and during that memorable sojourn, found his way on two different occasions to Monticello. The greetings and farewells, the felicitations and the tears then indulged by those venerable friends and associates in the two greatest revolutions of two continents should never fail to stir and mingle the memories of Americans and Frenchmen.

Viscount Ishii, pronouncing before the United States Senate, on behalf of his com-

mission and nation, a feverent tribute to American liberty, conjured with the name and vision of Jefferson. And other facts point to the probability that Japanese statesmen are well grounded in the history of American democracy. It has been written that Count Okuma, a former premier of his country, because of his admiration for the author of the Declaration, and of the favor with which he views republican institutions, has been called by his countrymen, the Jefferson of Japan.

But in none of the many allusions to American democracy made by the other visiting envoys, or by Americans on the various committees receiving them, was the name of Jefferson spoken. It was not in the colors of M. Viviani's beautiful word paintings, although in moving phrase and pathos he often touched upon the ties of Lafayette to us, and upon the fundamentals of our democracy. Nor should he or any foreign spokesman be criticised for this omission. They could only be expected to heed such personal preferences for political favorites here as they might have noted. It was their duty as well as their pleasure to pitch their speech in terms the most agreeable to those whom they came to address. And why should a French

orator in the situation of M. Viviani on those august occasions, refer to the Atlas of our democracy, or to his affectionate and important relations with the illustrious patriot of his own land, when probably he knew, as all who have made any study of it know, that from the time Jefferson rose to the pinnacle of his power and prestige, it had been the habit of an astute school of statesmen, publicists and French haters, wearing a thin veneer of democracy, to write him down, ostensibly in the thought that he derived his doctrines from the French, but in reality because of their aversion to democracy, when possibly he may have known that an American celebrity and ex-President had formally written and published, that Jefferson "loved the French with a servile devotion," a statement given such a clever setting as to warp and mislead the minds of the unwary,[5] when possibly he may have read and remembered that another of our Presidents, giving circulation to that false and frequent disparagement, had written in an attractive book that "Jefferson was not a thorough American because of the strain of French philosophy that permeated and weakened all his thought"?[6]

But whether or no, M. Viviani and his

colleagues had actually met with the comments thus made to queer American history and slur the fame of Jefferson, they could not fail to feel the influence of such work, nor to observe the silence it invoked, even if unconscious of its cause and source.

FRANCE

Any discussion of the attitude of Jefferson toward the French, as one may suppose, would not be relished now by those who have habitually claimed that people to be decadent, and characterized Jefferson as weak because he accounted them admirable and their revolution not without redeeming features. It would be especially so with the intellectuals who are now hastening to take the position which he then occupied. The war which today upheaves the world has turned thought back to elemental questions and to a readjusted light on the character of races. It enables Americans to place a different estimate on France. Viewed in the titanic conflict, no praise of her seems too high. We behold her courage, her grandeur, her soul, her love, her ideals. Jefferson saw and felt

them in his day, and in these words acknowledged them:

"I can not leave this great and good country without expressing my sense of its pre-eminence of character among the nations of the earth. A more benevolent people I have never known, nor greater warmth and devotedness in their select friendships. Their kindness and accommodation to strangers is unparalleled, and the hospitality of Paris is beyond anything I had conceived to be practicable in a large city. Their eminence too in science, the communicative dispositions of their scientific men, the politeness of the general manners, the ease and vivacity of their conversations, give a charm to their society, to be found nowhere else. In a comparison of this with other countries, we have the proof of primacy, which was given to Themistocles, after the battle of Salamis. Every general voted to himself the first reward of valor and the second to Themistocles. So, ask the travelled inhabitant of any nation, in what country on earth would you rather live?—Certainly, in my own, where are all my friends, my relations, and the earliest and sweetest affections and recollections of my life. Which would be your second choice? France."

TRIUMPH OF JEFFERSON'S OPINIONS

But this fairness to France was only one of many slogans under which the enemies of democracy attacked Jefferson and sought to dim his glory, while in each instance, as in this, time and trial have brought posterity to the support of his ideas, if not of him.

The late Senator George F. Hoar of Massachusetts spoke these splendid words:

> "Thomas Jefferson was one of those men who can differ from hemispheres, from generations, from administrations and from centuries with the perfect assurance that on any question of liberty and righteousness, if the opinion of Thomas Jefferson stand on one side and the opinion of mankind on the other, the world will, in the end, come around to his way of thinking."

To such length had the distrust of democracy proceeded before now among certain ones opposing it, that Jefferson was held

by them to be disqualified as a statesman because he was too learned. His intellectuality gave such critics great concern, and they could not believe that one diligent in the pursuit of science, polished in literature and the languages, could cope with the more practical duties of political life. But in this, sentiment seems to have changed. And most of us now concede that a statesman may be a student and yet be competent for public service.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

In the application of democratic principles to the security of religious liberty, he accomplished more than any man who ever lived. On that subject he drew the Virginia statute, "in all the latitude of reason and of right," to use his own phrase, and never ceased his labors in its behalf, until under it opinion on all questions of belief was free, and where first in the history of civilization, state and church stood separate. To be sure he was thoroughly despised for this by a few of his nearby neighbors, by a numerous body of his own State, and berated as an atheist from thou-

sands of pulpits throughout the land. But to-day, fearless, thankful, open-minded men do not fail to realize the immense value of this work and the world-wide extent of its appropriation, which bids fair to gem the constitution of every State on earth, as it does that of the United States.

A LARGE REPUBLIC

A fierce hue and cry was once raised against him for his efforts to broaden the public domain. The opponents of this did not believe in a big country, and they wanted ours to remain little. Some of them contended that democracy was practicable only in small countries. He said the bigger the country the better for it. They wanted to divide the country at the Mississippi, and talked of yielding to Spain our rights to navigate the great river. He said we will never yield an inch of its waters. They were greatly put out over the acquisition of Louisiana, and laid the blame for its purchase on him alone. No one else and no other agency was then joined with him in responsibility for it. But a later crop of critics, seeing that the policy of expan-

sion was working well and that the Republic, reaching to his dream, had gained favor, discovered to their satisfaction that the great province was not the fruit of his labor at all, but that it was due to others or to other agencies. One respectable authority[7] declares that the credit for the purchase belongs to Livingston, not to Jefferson. And another[8] tells us that Jefferson "was forced by the sentiment of the South and West" to act, and that in the negotiation he was "undignified," "timid" and "completely overmatched by the genius and lofty force of Bonaparte and Talleyrand," when in fact it was done with such masculine grasp of the situation from its inception to its finish, and completed so suddenly that scarcely a ripple of agitation arose over it in any locality, and was by the public in general an unexpected realization, when unfolded by the President and his ministers in all its actual and magnificent outlines—the consummation of his unerring impulse and daring statesmanship.

Results in this transaction, as in all engagements of great pith and moment, rather than words, show who the victor was and who the beaten. And it has always been the understanding of Americans and

the teaching of history until these later effusions, that Jefferson inspired and achieved the purchase of Louisiana. But if by such assertions, this proud chapter of American diplomacy can be so distorted as to cause his part in it to appear disgraceful, or his name to vanish from its glory, it will but add another evidence of the great and injurious extent to which the artful may plan and the supine among a people suffer ingratitude and the outrage of truth to triumph.

DEMOCRACY AND THE UNION

No greater distrust of democracy was manifest during the formative period of this Nation than that by which the existence of the Union itself became the subject of doubt and menace. And no truer or more timely service was ever rendered for its preservation than that in which Jefferson gave expression to his deep faith in its form, and in which he called for loyalty to its principles. Then his was not the theory of all; to-day it is. A friend and political leader appealed to him with suggestions looking to a separation of certain States

from the Union, at a time, 1798, when there was much complaint in all the country of federal encroachments upon personal liberty under the most odious laws ever enacted by Congress. Jefferson penned an answer in which he not only refused encouragement to the proposition presented, but he crushed all arguments for secession, setting forth clearly many advantages of the Union and the patience and tolerance which the citizen and minority parties should exercise toward the Government, even in periods of oppressive administration.[9] So fearless was he, and withal so firm in his belief of popular fidelity to the Union that he dismissed with careless derision the threats of the Essex Junto to break it up. But being further convinced of the serious designs of those plotters and malcontents, he set it down that "the cement of this Union is the heart-blood of every American," and further counseled the Republicans to put at stake for its safety, if need be, "their lives and fortunes on the pledge of their sacred honor."

No sooner had notice of the treason which Aaron Burr sowed over the country in his plot to set up another government within the borders of this one reached Jefferson, than he put on foot and inspired

such a vigilant and vigorous pursuit of the offenders, that their schemes and military forces were balked and dispersed before they could even form for resistance of the Federal arms. And the prosecution which followed their arrest was so thorough and able that nothing in all probability could have saved the chief defendant from the gallows, except the technical rulings, contrary to the spirit and substance of the Constitution and the law, made by the presiding judge,[10] biased to bitterness against Jefferson, and glossed over and commended by reporters, scribblers and partisans, some of them present at the trial, and all doing what they could to hinder the righteous cause of the Republic and give aid and comfort to the traitors. The public, though stunned at the rulings and decision of the court, acquiesced. But the lawyer who studies the case, condemns them. And the people who cherish the sanctity of their institutions and the inviolability of their Constitution, now approve the stainless, patriotic course of Jefferson to uphold them, and for such a bold and monumental offense would be satisfied to-day with nothing less than a full hearing and submission to the jury of the evidence as offered under that historic indictment.[11]

Six years prior to the great debate of Webster and Hayne in the United States Senate, with the sentiment of inseparable union glowing in the per oration of the former, Jefferson in referring to the approaching visit of Lafayette to this country, wrote that its effect would be salutary "by rallying us together and strengthening the habit of considering our country as one and indivisible."

But in spite of this, and the Nation's record of magic growth and adjustment to Federal needs under the lead of his constructive genius, the lynx-eyed fault-finder and cheap politician have taken occasion throughout their reign of license to dwell upon the charge, reiterated by writers of their caliber, that Jefferson was a State's-right man. The theory of State's-right had neither birth nor favor with him.[12] That doctrine first appeared as an issue in our politics after he had passed from its stage. He was for the rights of States, as he was for the rights of individuals and of the Nation. And he was for the security and proper poise of each and all of them in their several constitutional and related powers. He was for the Union in the full vigor required for its safety and its sovereignty. And he was with soul and might

for a robust Americanism and a sea-girt Republic under the aegis of the Federal Constitution of which no other being so timely or so clearly as he had vision.

INGRATITUDE

From his definition of liberty no race of man could be excluded, and his laws were given to make all free. Yet in the section of his birth and residence, where it may seem his greatness would have shared a special deference, the class of privilege based on the bondage of the blacks, and dominant there in social and political affairs, was so embarrassed by his teaching and its truth touching slavery, that in efforts to defend and justify that institution, it strove, as a matter of course, to parry his doctrine of freedom and to obscure his name. The partiality for his teachings lingered longer in the North. But there the political parties, although claiming foundation in his tenets, were effectually silenced by their aggressive associates in the South on any subject or any name the mention of which hinted in any manner at interference with the institution

of slavery. Thus the early prejudice of the commercial interests in New England against Jefferson was matched by this denial of him at the South, while the timid and sinister elements of both sections produced a political and educational cowardice and apathy that shunned and shaded his personal prestige everywhere. His name was in eclipse from the close of Jackson's administration to the end of the 19th century. Emigrants from the older States pushed westward during the thirties, forties and fifties in quest of lands and fortunes made possible by his foresight and alluring by his helpful policies, yet in that very pursuit and possession, they closed their memories against him. Those hardy, happy pioneers and their descendants have done almost nothing to impress upon their region his title to their gratitude, or upon their posterity the debt of honor they owe him. The youth, and young men of that period and since then, have passed through their school and college courses, many of them becoming familiar with the life story of Washington, Franklin, Jackson, Lincoln, Lee, and of characters less noted, without learning the name, much less the history of him in whose language their land was christened,[13] and under whose laws of

liberty and equality they were living and thinking, all unconscious of their prime mover. Instructors in our institutions of learning, with few exceptions, have been asleep to the history of democracy and blind to the biography of Jefferson. Such lack of appreciation is strikingly characteristic of the communities west of the Mississippi, the city of St. Louis being the sole exception. A city of the mountains distributed to its school buildings these names: Washington, Adams, Webster, Lincoln, Greely, Garfield, Blaine. Its board of education in taking this notice of national celebrities are in accord with those of their sister cities of the West in keeping the name of Jefferson from their lists, although indebted to his far-sighted and constructive policies for the very ground on which their buildings stand, and to a service by him in the interest of public education and the common school system of America beyond that of any man of his generation.[14]

LINCOLN OF JEFFERSON

But in 1860, the principles of democracy again became imperative, and men grew

bold in their assertion. The Union was imperiled, while slavery and emancipation were in the reckoning. A new political organization rallied under the vital principles and the very name in which the party of Jefferson was coined, and confident of the republicanism which he had taught and of its triumph, these new reformers lifted up and bore forward the banner of freedom and national unity, which those recreant to his ideals during the three decades which had then gone by, let slip from their careless hold. And with slavery wiped from the escutcheon of the Union by the struggle from which it came forth whole, another prophecy of Jefferson was fulfilled.[15] And while there was general rejoicing at this, his name was allowed to fade yet further into the shadow of oblivion, although his doctrines had become so popular that many hastened to ascribe their origin to the great President then leading in support of them, a claim which since that time has been widely inculcated, but which is without justification in fact.

Lincoln advocated and executed democratic principles with courage and wisdom. But no fundamental, democratic truth was ever announced by him or through his

efforts enacted into law, which had not had its origin and sanction in the teachings of Jefferson. History overflows with the evidence of this. But proof of it must be shortened here to the words of the immortal emancipator himself:

> "I have never had a feeling, politically, that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence. * * * I have often inquired of myself what great principle or idea it was that kept this Confederacy so long together. It was not the mere matter of separation of the colonies from the motherland, but that sentiment in the Declaration of Independence which gave liberty, not alone to the people of this country, but hope to all the world for all future time. It was that which gave promise that in due time the weight would be lifted from the shoulders of all men and that all should have an equal chance. This is the sentiment in the Declaration of Independence."[16]

And the purpose in pointing this out is to hold aloft the torch of truth, not to lessen the real eminence of Lincoln. He, as

other immortals, could he speak, would have only what belongs to him. Jefferson would ask no more, perhaps much less, for of all great men, he most veiled himself. But Lincoln, in his own way performed his own great part. And the fact that he rose to the full height of his opportunity, seized and put to its proper test the efficient, saving philosophy of another, is of itself enough to rank him high. He grasped the need and utility of republicanism as conceived and stated by Jefferson. And in this connection another wreath of greatness adorns the brow of Lincoln. For he neither failed to properly comprehend and appreciate Jefferson, nor denied the virtues of his precepts. Roosevelt describes him as a "doctrinaire" and says, "his influence in America was on the whole distinctly evil."[17] Choate termed his maxims of human liberty "glittering generalities." Calhoun called them "self evident lies." But Lincoln revived them in his livid English as "the axioms of free society" and further said:

> "All honor to Jefferson—to the man who, in the concrete pressure of a struggle for national independence by a single people, had the coolness, forecaste and sagacity to intro-

duce into a merely revolutionary document an abstract truth, applicable to all men and all times, and so embalm it there that today and in all coming days it shall be a rebuke and a stumbling block to the very harbingers of reappearing tyranny and oppression."[18]

THE FIRST DEMOCRATIC RULER

And now, we fight not simply as in other wars, for causes based on principles of democracy, but for democracy itself. And again, as then, the ideal which was so fiercely assailed at its dawn, is in the noon of its splendor hailed fervently. One hundred and seventeen years ago, there was but one democratic ruler in the world. And he was the first one, in the modern sense of the term. He was the only prominent statesman, who in the building of the Republic declared himself to be in favor of a democratic system of government, and cast his political life upon that theory.[19] The Federalists and monocrats endeavored to make both him and his cause odious.[20] But he was a democrat, not only by profession, but by his works. He put the stamp

of real republicanism on the government when he went into power, just as he had written it in the Declaration of Independence twenty-five years earlier. He sought no office, but served the public in obedience to its will. He opposed the influences leaning toward monarchy. He discouraged titles, levees and occasions in imitation of royalty. Kings he called fools, and scorned the doctrine of their divinity. On nepotism he set the ban of his disapproval, and made fitness the badge of patronage.[21] He believed in the rotation of official tenure and in a limit to the power of judges. He sought by education to qualify all citizens for public and private service and proclaimed sovereignty to be in the people.

THE FEDERALISTS

Those of opposite opinions, claimed Washington to be of their party. And many such enjoyed at his hands official trust and favor. Jefferson did not question the real preference of Washington for republicanism, but he did feel that those most in his confidence during his declining years committed him to opinions and meas-

ures not really of his choice.[22] Late in life, Washington took offense at Jefferson because of his pronounced democracy. And their estrangement, to whatever extent it may have existed, was owing to that. There was no withdrawal of esteem, however, on the part of Jefferson for Washington. He defended Washington to the last against the claims of his anti-republican friends. And he did so the more with the growth of his own official prestige and overwhelming endorsement of his doctrines by the people. He went far to save the fame of Washington to the principles of republicanism. And the very devotion of Jefferson to democracy, every word he ever uttered, every act of his in its support must weigh to his special credit now, when democracy has become so distinctly ascendant. For democracy against oligarchy was formerly an issue. Policies obnoxious to republican rule were favored by men in the cabinet of Washington. And he was not always alert to resist their reactionary tendencies. He indorsed the Alien and Sedition laws of the Adams administration. Jefferson assailed those laws and the conduct of the Government under the Federalists. And he was right in doing so. Does any one who believes in republican democracy now

regret that the principles advocated by Jefferson prevailed? These questions could not be debated without including, to some extent, the latter part of Washington's political course. The monarchial and reactionary conduct of the Federalists had committed the first President to a weak and unfortunate position. And his displeasure at the criticisms of him by the Republicans arose principally from the vulnerable environment and the support of offensive measures into which he had thus been drawn, though his complaints were mild and dignified in contrast with the hatred and detraction poured forth against the champion of democracy by the Federalists and hangers-on who sought to hide their errors and avert their downfall under cover of Washington's mighty name.[23] But even so, it was all to no avail, when under the leadership of the people's confident tribune, the election of 1800, brought our country to the open door of democracy. And anything that Jefferson may have said, questioning in any manner the wisdom of policies upheld by Washington, was in a tone of regret at the appearance of his departure from republican rule and doctrine, and with the hope and resolve that the people should have the

opportunity to retain and promote democracy as deep and broad as it had been laid in the foundations of the Republic.

WASHINGTON

Whether Washington was wise in his endeavor to balance the administration of public affairs between democracy and aristocracy, and to choose as his aids in their conduct, men of irreconcilable views on primary principles of government, may be left, with the mere suggestion of the fact, to individual judgment. But, however that may be, surely Washington can not, in the light of history and reason, be looked upon as the fountain head of American democracy or as our towering representative of republicanism, although he may have remained, as Jefferson insisted he did, willing to see it have a fair trial. The fame of a soldier is one thing; that of a lawgiver quite another. The courage, the prescience, the skill of Washington leading the army of Independence, leaves equal glory in that field to no other name. As President during the first eight years under the Federal Constitution, he displayed disin-

terestedness, honesty of purpose, honesty of rule and ability of a high order. But his administration did not reach that degree of perfection which shines through the pure republican one of Jefferson, superior to any other for simplicity in the conduct of affairs, for absence of formality and ostentation, for its wholesome economy, the reduction of the public debt and taxes at the same time, for its stimulus to national development, its aid to internal improvements and expanse of territory, for its favor to the arts and sciences, for its efficiency in every department of public service, for the wonderful harmony in which the President and all under him labored, for its keen and constant interest in the general welfare, and its quick, human touch with men in every quarter of the country, bringing back to the Union with fresh and striking enthusiasm the love and loyalty of the people, while in the discovery and development of democratic truth and its application to the use and guidance of free institutions, the Sage of Monticello holds an easy mastery, and is there unrivaled by the Hero of Mt. Vernon.

WORDS OF WISDOM

A glimpse of Jeffersonian democracy may be had from the following excerpts:

"Acquiescence under insult is not the way to escape war."

"Insult and war are the consequences of a want of respectability in the national character."

"Much as I abhor war, and view it as the greatest scourge of mankind, and anxiously as I wish to keep out of the broils of Europe, I would yet go with my brethren into these, rather than separate from them."

"We have borne patiently a great deal of wrong, on the consideration that if nations go to war for every degree of injury, there would never be peace on earth. But when patience has begotten false estimates of its

motives, when wrongs are pressed because it is believed they will be borne, resistance becomes morality."

"Freedom, the first born daughter of science."

"The disease of liberty is catching."

"All men are created equal."

"The rights of a free people are derived from nature, not their magistrate."

"Our countrymen are essentially republican."

"We of the United States are constitutionally and conscientiously democrats."

"The people may be led astray for a moment, but they will soon correct themselves."

"The will of the majority honestly expressed should give law."

"Republicanism exists in governments only in the proportion to which they embody the will of their people and execute it."

"Our liberty can never be safe but in the hands of the people themselves, and that too, of the people with a certain degree of instruction. This it is the business of the state to effect, and on a general plan."

"The information of the people at large can alone make them the safe, as they are the sole depositary of our political and religious freedom."

"Perhaps it will be found that to obtain

a just republic it must be so extensive as that local egoisms may never reach its greater part."

"It seems that the smaller the society the bitterer the dissensions into which it breaks. * * * I believe ours is to owe its permanence to its great extent, and the smaller portion comparatively, which can ever be convulsed at one time by local passions."

"I believe in action by the citizens in person, in affairs within their reach and competence, and in all others by representatives * * * and that a government by representation is capable of extension over a greater surface of country than one of any other form."

"The preservation of the holy fire of republicanism is confided to us by the world and the sparks which will emanate from it will ever serve to rekindle it in other quarters of the globe."

"I have but one system of ethics for men and for nations."

DREAMER AND DOER

These thoughts and a thousand others of equal import on this and kindred topics in the writings of Jefferson are only stronger and of greater significance when considered with the contexts from which they are taken. And their worth is multiplied many times by the actual use to which he brought them. Here indeed his service was signal. As he dreamed he created. He suited to formal governments the profound maxims of the idealist. Prior to his day, democracy had existed only in the abstract, except in a limited way in the little states of ancient times. It had been discussed only in academic fashion. It had been given some such expression by a few of the choice and radical spirits of England, France and other countries. But never until 1776, had it been incorporated into a state paper as the foundation of a nation and the ultimate legal expression of human rights.[24] What had been thus longed for and presented in a speculative way, he made real. The ideal he reduced to the actual, put the terms of equal rights and opportunity into common thought and into statutes, scattered the seeds of human

liberty through public and private literature and ribbed charters and constitutions with the holiest, sanest democracy that ever blessed and sweetened the governments of man. And in so fusing the verities of democracy into the laws, the life and the aspirations of the people, he bequeathed to humanity their greatest utility and benefit.

That no exaggeration may be charged to the claim that pronounced spirituality fills the code of Jefferson, let us again quote the late Senator Hoar:

> "The author of the Declaration of Independence stands in human history as the foremost man who ever lived, whose influence has led men to govern themselves in the conduct of states by spiritual laws. That was Jefferson's mission—to teach spiritual laws. Observe that I say spiritual laws, not spiritual truths merely, not formulae to be assented to, but rules of life to be governed by and acted upon. It was due to Jefferson that our fathers laid deep the foundation of the state in the moral law."

And to the opinions of the great already cited in proof of Jefferson's genuine and

practical democracy, let there be added these also rendered weighty by the wisdom and character of those who gave them utterance:

"Jefferson drew the title deed of our liberties."[25]

"Into the monumental act of Independence, Jefferson poured the soul of the continent."[26]

"He put into it (the Declaration) something that was his own, and that no one else could have put there. He put himself into it—his own genius, his own moral force, his faith in God, his faith in ideas, his love of innovation, his passion for progress, his invincible enthusiasm, his intolerance of proscription, of injustice, of cruelty, his sympathy, his clarity of vision, his affluence of diction, his power to fling out great phrases which will long live and cheer the souls of men struggling against political unrighteousness."[27]

"The Declaration covers the case of America so justly that it enables the reader to forget America in man."[28]

"Its influence upon American legal and constitutional development has been profound. Lock, says Leslie Stephen, popularized a convenient formula for enforcing the responsibility of governors, but his theories were those of an individual, while by the Declaration a State, for the first time in history, founded its life on democratic idealism, pronouncing governments to exist for securing the happiness of the people, and to derive their just powers from the consent of the governed."[29]

"The assertion in the New World that men have a right to happiness and an obligation to promote the happiness of one another, struck a spark in the Old World."[30]

"The Republic is but the lengthened shadow of Jefferson."[31]

"Modern America is Jeffersonian. * * * In Jefferson was personified for the first time the American idea in its full and confident expression against prejudice, against timid conservatism, against historical experiences, the cherished traditions of Eu-

rope, the French Revolution, and the armed potentates of the world."[32]

"No man has ever been so loved in the United States, or loved so long, as Thomas Jefferson was by those who had no interest apart from this common interest and no hope or desire except to share the common lot of man."[33]

"The wisdom that Jefferson showed in working for a future good, and the willingness to forego the pomp of personal power, to sacrifice self, if need be, that the day he should not see might be secure, ranks him as first among statesmen."[34]

"While others sought to preserve to the colonies the full enjoyment of British freemen, Jefferson declared their proper aim to be the assertion of the rights of man."[36]

"The principles of Thomas Jefferson as embodied in our system of government are to statecraft what the teachings of the Christ are to religion."[35]

"Jefferson was the first, and, for a long time the only very prominent American we know of who was willing to persistently own that democracy constituted the essence of his system, or the rule of construction which he would apply to the mixed forms of the State and Federal Governments."[37]

"Jefferson is one of the greatest geniuses this country has produced."[38]

"He is one of the choice ones of the earth."[39]

"Few biographies leave on the mind an impression of nobler character than that of Thomas Jefferson, and yet there has probably never been a man who has excited such antagonisms and been so detested and execrated by good men as he.

"I myself was brought up in a family where the traditions were all anti-Jeffersonian. And as I write these eulogistic words, I am somewhat in dread lest my honored grandfather shall arise in indignation and rebuke me. Indeed, until quite recently I believed that Jefferson was only another name for incarnate evil; that he

was guilty not only of the enormity of having fathered the Democratic party, but a man who was blasphemous, vulgar, and in fact quite unfit for the society of self-respecting people. * * * But no Roman was sterner in virtue, no Spartan more severe in ideas of truth and justice. His principles were exalted and philosophically true, and his fidelity to them was absolute. In the use of his great gifts never did he seem impelled by small motives or by personal ambitions.

"* * * Jefferson alone seemed to comprehend American institutions, as experience and time have developed them and as we behold them to-day. He stands now as the most complete exponent, not of this political party or that, as is claimed, but of Americanism."[40]

"Important as was the brave and determined course of Jefferson in uniting the fortunes of Virginia with those of Massachusetts when the latter colony was the special object of monarchic tyranny; helpful as were his efforts in securing the Standing Committee of Correspondence for the colonies; immensely valuable as was his 'Summary View' to the cause of American freedom; essentially glorious as were his voicing of the New World protest and proclamation in the Declaration of Independence; great and far-reaching for good as

was his work as the pre-eminent leader in aggressive statemanship in Virginia, which eventuated in religious freedom, the abolition of entail and primogeniture, and the provision for the equal division of inheritances; splendid as were his program for popular education and his plan for the abolition of slavery and the colonization of the negroes—all these services are overshadowed and ecilpsed by his brave, masterly and victorious stand for freedom against monarchic, reactionary and class interests. This may, indeed, be said to be the supreme service he rendered in the founding of the greatest of modern nations; for his genius, courage, single-heartedness, patriotism and loyalty to the lodestone of liberty and just government, guaranteeing equality of opportunity and rights to all citizens, served to beat back the baleful influences that in the light of history and the nature of society could only in the end have proved fatal to free government."[41]

"When the Republican party came into power in 1801, their great leader, who, take him all in all, was the most influential and most masterful personal factor that has ever appeared in American politics, published in his first inaugural address a state paper which ranks second only to the Declaration of Independence. * * * Jeffersonian democracy has never since been

seriously combatted by any political party, but all subsequent parties have assumed to represent its principles."[42]

"While other statesmen, appearing at different crises and meeting the responsibilities of their respective times, have made partial application of democratic principles, Jefferson is the only one who promulgated a democratic code applicable to all times, all situations and all peoples."[43]

"Jefferson saw Americans, not as a set of people huddled together under the muzzles of machine guns, but he saw them as a myriad of independent and free men, as individuals, only relying on a combined military force for protection against aggression from abroad or treachery from within. He saw a community of people guided by a community of good thought and pure patriotism, using their own special talents in their own special way under their own sacred roof-trees. Not a machine-made nation, but a living, growing, organism, animated by one passion—the passion of liberty."[44]

HOW DEMOCRACY HAS LOST

But the chief apology for these pages is not simply to affirm that Jefferson was the greatest of statesmen and lawgivers. It is to suggest the immeasurable loss democracy has suffered through our failure to correctly appraise and extend his fame and philosophy. Achievement may win recognition, in some instances possibly the fullest recognition, disassociated from any thought of the one with whom it originates. But a knowledge of the moving, personal factor usually creates a keener interest and wider influence for what is done, than would otherwise result. It is hardly probable that the dramas of Shakespeare would have been so generally or so heartily received as they have been everywhere, without the mental association of them with William Shakespeare himself. Are not the Gospels more sought after, do they not grip the soul deeper because of the personality of the Master that shines in every chapter and lends to the reader His spiritual fellowship?

The personal element, then, may mean much not only for him to whom history owes justice, but for humanity to which it

owes the widest information. It is not improbable that to-day the democracy of Jefferson would have universal acceptance among us and among other peoples, if we had proclaimed it all along as his, instead of trying to pass it over at one time and another to the credit of some one else or to confuse its authorship in the maze of many names and more general factors. If in this we had been candid and right, American democracy would not now have to dispute the field with that of modern Germany. We would not be drifting as we are upon an uncertain sea of political and economic thought, while men imbibe the propaganda and fallacies of Marx. Our Government would not be obliged to spend its energy and vast sums of money, which it is now doing, to thwart the disloyalty of American citizens schooled in foreign doctrines.

Is not Jeffersonian democracy good enough for Americans? Was the appeal not to it, when we achieved Independence, framed the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, enlarged the country, wrote tolerance into creed, restrained monopoly, effected emancipation, preserved the Union, kept money sound and speech, press and people free? Would not a continued

reliance upon it have saved us from the tramp, the trust, the union, the group, and from all the exotic and noxious nostrums and monopolies which have permeated and irritated our industrial life? By it, and in the terms of liberty and law, considerately fitted to each changing circumstance, every right and relation of industrial and social growth and need could have been and could yet be defined and stabilized.

The Russian says he wants American democracy. Have we put it in his way? We have not given him even a chance to have it. He has not been told that such a man as Thomas Jefferson ever lived, or that the sanest principles of republicanism abide in his burning code. Of this he is as ignorant as millions of Americans. Our otherwise militant democracy, long opposed by the Eastern aristocrat and the Southern slave-holder, is now diffused and discredited in the prevalent denial of its creator. This has left the Russian free to absorb alone the same teaching which in its enmity to individual and national courage has come to the support of a brutal militarism in Germany, and diligently cultivates treason in the United States. No wonder the Russian ranks gave way and fled at Lemburg and at Riga. The soph-

istry of Marx and Lenine does not nerve men to breast the shock of battle. It teaches them to fling themselves away, to fling away their nation. Who ever heard of a battle won by a debating club? It has been said that Russia in her awful crisis needs a Washington. Does she? No. She needs, as she has long needed, a Jefferson. She has Washingtons. That is, she has great patriot captains, brave as the bravest, trained to the latest moment of military science, and ready and able to lead the Russian armies to victory. There is the consummate Brusiloff, the brave Alexieff, the dauntless Russky. But the men under them refused to follow. The fault is not in the commanders. It is in the rank and file, and it is there by reason of the spurious democracy they have embraced.

The democracy of Jefferson inspires soldiers. It brings them to the firing line where they know and do their duty. They accept the sense and need of obedience. They feel that death with freedom safe is better than life with freedom lost. Nurtured in it, the individual realizes that he is something in himself with powers and possibilities beyond those of the inarticulate mass; that he is greater than a planet, and he is, because he can think and love

and battle for his rights; that he should defend his nation because it stands as the guardian of his home, his life and all the ties of his happiness; that it is idle for him to stake his fate and that of his country on the vague promises of noisy pacifists, often the victims, when not the tools of organized tyranny. The patriots who suffered at Valley Forge and won at Yorktown; the riflemen who picked off the veterans of Pakenham at Chalmette Plain; the heroes who held in Shilo's leaden deluge were drilled in the tactics of Washington, Jackson and Grant, but they were bred in the democracy of Jefferson.

PERFECTION OF CHARACTER

Depreciation of Jefferson is all the more strange and all the more shameful because of his personal worth and purity. Never was human character happier than his. Its completeness seems almost to have been of pre-natal design. His mother was a Randolph, descended from those of that name who in England, had won and worn renown among imperial warriors, statesmen and scholars. And Jane, the eldest

daughter of Isham Randolph, was a true type of the womanhood and motherhood worthy of such advantage. Peter Jefferson was of modest lineage. But he possessed the giant powers of body and mind, the quiet, ruling presence, the mastery of self, the sureness of capacity, which in rich and poor alike, make kings of men, which brought him welcome in a family of the elite and made him there a successful suitor. And from patrician and plebeian thus mated sprang Thomas Jefferson. in body plain, in soul august, and destined beyond the fairest dream of conjugal affection to unite and make common in his life and in his deeds the grace of his mother. the strength of his father.

His childhood, sweet as a bygone summer, resembled an idyl of innocence. The tasks required of him in toil and study, the pursuit of music, the cheer of good humor and charm of courtships engrossed his youth and later teens, and yet in that tender time, men of learning chose with him companionship. His maturer years but tell of their agreement at every stage with nature, with duty and with conscience. His whole life was an open, spotless page, and the exemption of its earlier as its later periods from every vice carried

to its close the halo of its perfect morals. "The glow of a warm thought" he once said, "is to me worth more than money." He wished "not only no act but no thought of his to be unknown." He declared that he "feared no truth for he felt no falsehood." And on taking final leave of office, he rejoiced that "his hands were as clean as they were empty."

Men of such correctness often lack in heart; but here, as Hawthorne says, "Jefferson emerged superior." His record exhibits a very flush of friendships, running the whole gamut of humankind from Melbourne, the negro, to Franklin, the philosopher. His kindness and help to the slaves whom the law placed in his charge was a segment of his vision for emancipated man. His attention to their every need in the rearing and education of his daughters, left motherless in childhood, was proof that his nature was dual, possessing the touch and sympathy that flower in the delicate sensibilities of woman, as well as the rugged qualities that mould the sterner sex. And other gifts also marked the variety and bounty of his tastes and talents. For he was the most cultured statesman of his time, yet evinced the true initiative of the pioneer. Art and science engaged him;

nature, tame or wild, enthralled him. He greeted with unfeigned delight the earliest leaf and blossom of the garden, while he conceived and encouraged to success the most momentous campaign of exploration ever essayed in the Western World. He referred to himself as "a savage of the mountains" to express his choice for rural over urban residence, yet appeared as a lion of litterati and of society, welcomed to their midst and showered with their attentions, whose choicest circles he entered with ease and left a general favorite. This he did as President of the American Philosophical Society and in the select companies to which he drew in Old Virginia and at the capitals while Secretary of State and Vice-President; which he did also in Paris as a member of the French Academy of Science and at the noted salon of Madame Houdetot and other centers there of fashion, beauty, wit and genius, whether talking philosophy with St. Lambert, zoology with Buffon, belles letters with Baron Grim, criticism with De Grignon, the Revolution with Montmorin, the French Constitution with Lafayette, art with the Countess de Tesse, finance with M. Necker or humanity with Madam de Stael.

But with all this wealth of varied faculties and long continuance at the summit of public place and power, he never lost the genuine fervor and simplicity of the commoner nor the sure direction of his republican mind. At the age of eighty-three, he pronounced the word "Republic" with the same enthusiasm in which he wrote it at thirty-three. Neither prestige of success, nor office, nor glitter abroad, nor flattery at home, nor charm of mighty friends, nor challenge of majorities could wean or shake him from his first and robust faith in the people and future of democracy.

THE END

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